

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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## LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNNE," ETC., ETC.

### CHAPTER XII.

"PHIL went away in low spirits this morning. Naturally, he was very much cut up at poor Thorne's death; they were such great chums at one time," said Colonel Wickham, looking in upon the squire that afternoon.

"Yes, yes," agreed the squire. "Terrible ending to a promising young man! Awful shock it must be to his poor mother. Thorne Hall goes to a distant cousin, doesn't it?"

"I'm not sure. You see I never had much intercourse with the Thornes. I didn't know them in the father's time; the mother was always a little too much of the fine lady to suit me. Poor woman! It'll take it out of her now, anyhow. Phil was round, of course, this morning to say good-bye to Edie?"

"Suppose so," answered the squire. "Edie's eyes have been uncommonly red all the forenoon, and there have been sundry distant rumblings and threatenings of an approaching storm. Poor little woman! No doubt Phil's starting off in such a hurry has upset some of her plans, and she's not one to take disappointments easily."

"An approaching storm!" It would have been nearer the truth to have said that the storm had come, and was now at its height, for there was little Edie in her own room sobbing out her sorrows into the sofa-pillows, vowing and declaring that everything in life was horrible, and miserable, and ugly, and bad; that she knew something dreadful would happen to Phil, or to her, before they set eyes on each other again; that Phil ought—ought—to

have known, no matter what she might have said, that she loved him better than all the rest of the world put together, and that her heart would break if he didn't write to her at least once every day!

And all these tears, forsooth, because Phil had started off to London without going through an elaborate and fervid farewell with the young lady—a farewell which, if he had attempted; no doubt she would have cut short with a toss of her curly brown head, a distant shake of the hand, and a little formal prepared speech that "it was quite too ridiculous to make a fuss over saying good-bye now that they were to be friends and nothing more to each other."

Ellinor, in spite of her early rising that day, did not join the family till the evening. The vicar called again and again, in the hope of seeing her and taking her the round of his pet charities. Thirdly and finally he sent a note, saying that, if Miss Yorke would name her own time on the following day, he would be only too happy to place himself at her disposal.

"I'm afraid, my dear," said the squire to Edie, eyeing askance the vicar's note, and guessing at its contents—"I'm very much afraid our respected vicar is going to make a fool of himself."

"I'm sure I hope not, papa," retorted Edie crisply, and looking right up into the squire's face. "I do hate to see old men making themselves ridiculous over young girls who are only laughing at them all the time."

The squire winced, and said no more.

When Ellinor at length made her appearance at the dinner-table that evening, she, like Edie, seemed limp, languid, and indisposed for conversation. If the two girls had been rival Grand Duchesses at an

impecunious German Court, they could not have rendered a stricter obedience to the minute laws of social etiquette. To get a laugh out of either was an impossibility; almost equally an impossibility was it to induce either to evince the faintest show of interest in the various "topics of the day" which the squire started in succession for their especial benefit. At last, in despair almost, he bethought him of a certain item of local news which he had heard that morning, and which must surely stir them up a bit to say something sour, sweet, or startling, as the whim might take them.

"Ah, by-the-bye, I've a little bit of news for you," he began, looking furtively out of the corner of one eye, and thanking Providence that both the girls had declined dessert, thereby shortening the already long dinner by at least ten minutes. "I meant to have told it you at luncheon, but forgot it. Lord Winterdowne arrived at the Castle last night, and already appears to have made a good impression; no end of people were singing his praises this morning."

If he had been looking at Ellinor's face, instead of at the walnut he was peeling at the moment, he would have seen a curious expression pass over it—a look of sudden interest, a nervous contraction of the forehead, and then a tightening of the lips, and a drooping of the eyelid. Just such a look it was, as man or woman might wear who, having resolved upon a certain career in life, sees suddenly spread beneath his or her eye all the glories and splendour of an exactly opposite course, and, turning away the head, will not look upon it. She did not open her lips, however.

Edie did.

"Well, papa," she said, speaking crisply, as she had been speaking all day, "if everybody is singing his praises, I should say he must be a very disagreeable person—milk-and-water, and all that. I always detest the people everyone praises. And, in any case, he must be a remarkably foolish person. Didn't you say he had come from Florence, or somewhere nice? Well, then, the idea of anyone leaving a dear, bright, beautiful place in Italy to come to dull, dingy, miserable little Stanham is quite beyond my comprehension."

Speechless, the squire arched his brows at her. The fact of his little daughter characterising the place of her birth and home, which she had been wont to call the

"dearest, brightest spot in all the world," as "dull, dingy, and miserable," was a thing quite beyond his comprehension. The weather must be getting very murky indeed.

Ellinor did not go with Edie into the drawing-room after dinner, but proceeded straight upstairs into her own room.

Gretchen was in attendance in a moment, and Mélanie had in another moment disappeared. This was the routine of Miss Yorke's dressing-room.

"You may bring the writing-table, Gretchen; I want a letter written to my uncle Hugh," said Ellinor, though not with quite her usual decision of voice and manner.

Gretchen promptly arranged pens, paper, and envelopes.

The letter, however, seemed somewhat difficult to dictate. Apparently the words did not come with their wonted readiness to Ellinor's tongue. She made one or two turns up and down her long dressing-room; she even wandered into the adjoining room (her bedroom), thence slowly back again; brought her chair close to the brightly-burning fire; and leaned back with her hands clasped over her eyes, as one might who had an intricate and not easily adjusted subject for thought.

The well-trained Gretchen "stood at attention" in a distant corner of the room.

Presently Ellinor asked a slow question.

"Where did Mrs.—the housekeeper here, I mean—say you could get the best view of Winterdowne Castle and Park?"

"From the hill at the back of the church, madame—Frog's Hill, I think the people about here call it."

Then there came another pause, a longer one than before, during which the logs hissed and sang on the bright fire, the clock on the mantelpiece above ticked and chimed the hour, but the letter to Uncle Hugh advanced not by one single pen's scratch.

At length Ellinor had an order to give. It was: "Put away the pen and ink, Gretchen. I won't write to my uncle Hugh to-night."

#### CHAPTER XIII.

"I SHOULD like to ride over those hills at the back of the church, they look quite tempting from my bedroom-window," said Ellinor, coming down quite early—for her,

that is—the following morning, in riding-habit and gauntlets.

Eddie, occupied in feeding her bullfinch with breadcrumbs, and trying to entice him out of his cage, made no reply, and did not so much as turn her head.

"Eh? Capital idea, my dear," said the squire cheerily, delighted to welcome even the faintest sign of returning animation in his home-circle. "Only, unfortunately, I can't go with you this morning. I have made an appointment with Farmer Rodwell, to go through his farm-buildings and see what repairs are wanted; he'll let me in for a pot of money if I don't look after him a bit. But, Eddie, you can go with Ellinor, of course. A canter will do you good this morning."

Eddie shook her head.

"I have to go into the village; some of my Sunday class are ill, and I couldn't neglect them for any amount of canters over the hills." Then she added a little maliciously: "Send a note round to the vicar and ask him to go; it might do instead of the schools."

Ellinor did not condescend to reply to this remark, did not even look in Eddie's direction.

"Can I have one of the grooms?" she asked, looking at and addressing the squire.

"Certainly, my dear—Thomas, John, or any one you like. I'll tell them to bring the horses round; I'm going out through the stables."

And, as he finished speaking, the squire made a rapid exit from the room, fearful of any further dispute arising between the two girls, upon which, possibly, he might be required to adjudicate.

So Ellinor, attended by Thomas, enjoyed her canter over the hills that morning, and drew rein on the summit of Frog's Hill, for a full fifteen minutes taking a leisurely survey of the landscape it commanded on either side.

Frog's Hill, or, more correctly, Frogatt's Hill, from the name of the farmer who, in a previous generation, had owned and tilled its steep sides, was the highest point in that part of Berkshire, and commanded as extensive a view of hill, dale, wood, and open as any to be found in the home-counties. At its base lay the picturesque, irregular little village of Stanham, dominated by its ivy-covered church with its ancient steeple. On its north side—the side up which Ellinor had ambled on the pretty chestnut the squire had placed at

her disposal—lay Wickham Place, with its small, well-kept park, its acres of undulating pasture-land. A glimpse of the square-built Elizabethan structure could just be had through the scant-leaved October elms and beeches. A gentleman's house, and, above all, an English gentleman's house it looked, neat, trim, comfortable in the fullest sense of the word, and devoid alike of ornamentation or pretension.

On the south side of this breezy hill lay another and more striking landscape. A long stretch of wild moorland, a desolate, rugged heath, bounded by dark, thick woods. Over these woods loomed the tower and turrets of Winterdowne Castle, a noble edifice, which had been kept up in princely style for generations, and which carried with its title seignorial rights over much contiguous land, and river, and wood. In fact, the Lords of Winterdowne were, without cavil or dispute, the lords paramount of that part of Berkshire and the adjoining portion of the sister county.

Ellinor sat silently in her saddle, surveying the two domains. Now her head would turn this way—to the north, now that—to the south. A slight frown knotted her forehead; her eyes had a thoughtful, appraising look in them. Had she been a prospective purchaser of one or other of these two estates, and had mounted the hill for the whole and sole purpose of forming an estimate in outline of their respective value, she could not have surveyed them more deliberately, keenly, scrutinisingly.

Presently she signed to Thomas that she had something to say to him.

"That pasture-land and that river belong to Winterdowne Castle, I suppose?" she asked, as Thomas brought his horse forward.

"Yes, ma'am, right on as far as you can see, east and west, it all belongs to Lord Winterdowne," answered Thomas.

"He must be enormously rich," pursued Ellinor, as though she were uttering aloud her own thoughts.

"That he is, ma'am; people say he has between eighty and ninety thousand a year," again responded Thomas, with not a little pride that this corner of the county could boast of so wealthy a magnate.

Ellinor's thoughts were very busy during her short ride back to the Hall. Her thinking was, generally speaking, conducted in practical, logical fashion, unlike that

of most girls of her age, with whom thought comes and goes in flashes, or else merges into dreams where fact and logic are alike unknown. Her thoughts this morning, put down on paper, would have run somewhat in this fashion :

"Here am I, as it were, at a great auction-mart, with a certain fixed amount of money in my purse, choosing which of two lots I shall bid for. Here is lot number one : A magnificent country home, a house in London, and contingent advantages ; a princely income, a scientific, rather middle-aged man for a husband, and—a coronet. Here is lot number two : A comfortable country home, a comfortable but moderate income, a handsome, light-hearted young fellow for a husband, and—no coronet."

Was there not, however, something difficult to define—hard to call by any name save that of personal liking, which, in this latter lot, might be put in place of the coronet—might, in fact, almost, if not quite, outweigh it in value, and make it better worth her while to bid for the second lot, and let the first go by ?

It took her all that morning, all that afternoon, and half that evening to decide this point. Sometimes one lot would seem to her better worth bidding for, sometimes another. She took Edie's album up into her own room and sat with it open at Phil's photograph, staring into his honest, open face till she knew every line and curve of every feature.

"If he had only been ever so little in love with me it would have cost me nothing to give him up," she said to herself over and over again ; "but to be scorned—to be anathematised—to be despised, as he so evidently despises me, is beyond bearing !"

Then, too, how handsome, how distinguished he had looked as he spoke all those hard words to her in the shrubbery, among the hazel-rods ! If she could only have put the coronet into this lot, she could have let the princely income go without a sigh.

And so on—and so on, till she, Ellinor Yorke, the dispassionate—the serene-tempered—the calm reasoner, began to grow sick and giddy with her own thinking, and made up her mind desperately to end it one way or the other.

It wanted but a minute to six o'clock ; dinner was to be at half-past seven, and the great business of dressing had not yet been begun. She shut up the photographic-

album with a vehement bang—there was no other word for it—and jumped to her feet.

"It shall be the coronet," she said aloud. "I can do more than one thing in life, surely, and it will be just as easy to bring this young man to my feet as Lady Winterdowne as it would be as Miss Yorke."

Her vehement handling of the album had dislodged one of the photographs ; it slipped to the ground, and now lay face upwards at her feet. It was Edie's portrait. Bright, sparkling, imperiously happy, it looked up at her.

"Are you so sure of doing two things in life, Miss Ellinor ?" it seemed to say. "Do you think it will be such an easy thing to bring this young man—this lover of mine—to your feet ? Do you forget he belongs to me—he is bound to me, body and soul ?"

This was beyond endurance. Farewell to the coronet now ! Once and for ever Ellinor's mind was made up. She rang the bell for Gretchen.

"Put the album and this thing away," she said when her maid entered, pointing with her foot to little Edie's face on the carpet ; "and before I begin dressing I want a letter written to my uncle Hugh, so as to save the night-mail."

This was the letter Uncle Hugh received from his niece on the following day :

"The Hall, Stanham.

"DEAR UNCLE HUGH,—I find this place doesn't suit me, and if I stay on much longer I shall be downright ill. Will you, therefore, kindly arrange for my coming up to London one day next week. I shall amazingly like to keep house for you.—Ever your affectionate niece,

"ELLINOR YORKE"

#### CHAPTER XIV.

THE following correspondence took place between Uncle Hugh and Ellinor Yorke before the close of the week.

From Hugh Pelham Yorke, Esq. :

"The Albany, London, Nov. 1st.

"DEAR ELLINOR,—Your letter nearly knocked me over. London for you in November ! Impossible ! You are not like me, an old fellow who knows how to make himself comfortable anywhere, and who has made a study of London, its weak and its strong points, till he knows, in the season or out of it, exactly where to go and what to do. It's not to be thought of,



my dear. Everyone you know is away—every house you could go to is closed. You would simply die of ennui before the first week was over your head. I am sorry you don't 'get on' with the Fairfaxes. I suppose that is what your anxiety to get away from them really means. I know very little of them, but they always seemed to me genial, kindly people, if a little provincial. Try them for another week or so, then write again and let me know how you get on.—Your affectionate uncle,

"H. P. YORKE."

From Miss Yorke :

"The Hall, Stanham, Berkshire, Nov. 2nd.

"DEAR UNCLE HUGH,—I 'get on' with the Fairfaxes quite as well as I do with most people. I agree with you they are kindly people (Mr. Fairfax is, at any rate), although decidedly provincial. My reason for wishing to leave Stanham is that the air does not suit me. It is rough and breezy—I can hardly breathe in it. Kindly therefore tell me which day you can meet me in London, and what arrangements had best be made. I should think there must be a number of comfortable furnished houses to be let now within a mile or so of Piccadilly.—With much love, always your affectionate niece,

"ELLINOR YORKE."

"Ugh!" shuddered Uncle Hugh when he read the latter part of this missive, "is the girl mad? Does she think I would give up this"—here he glanced round his spacious luxurious apartment—"to rough it with her in a small furnished house in a by-street, and have my spirits crushed and my digestion injured by petty botherations and domestic worries. Stuff!"

This was the note he sent in reply :

"The Albany, London, Nov. 3rd.

"DEAR ELLINOR,—On second thoughts, why not join your mother at Mentone? You will find the air there the reverse of rough and breezy, and I should say the change would do you a great deal of good. You know I proposed, in the first instance, that you should go with her instead of going down into Berkshire.

"I know several people just starting for the South, and can easily find you a suitable chaperon. Your affectionate uncle,

"H. P. YORKE."

From Miss Yorke :

"The Hall, Stanham, Nov. 4th.

"DEAR UNCLE HUGH,—I may be very glad to go to Mentone a little later in the

year, or perhaps at the beginning of next year, but for a time I must be in London. I want to consult a physician as to my lungs—if I'm not careful I may get into just as bad a way as Juliet.

"I don't care in the least what arrangements you make for me (I could go into rooms if that would suit you better), but I feel that my coming to London is an absolute necessity. I dread the idea of getting ill here, and falling into the hands of some incompetent local practitioner, more than I can say. With much love, ever your affectionate niece,

"ELLINOR YORKE."

Two days elapsed before Ellinor received Uncle Hugh's reply to this. When it came it ran as follows :

"The Albany, London, Nov. 6th.

"DEAR ELLINOR,—I am sorry to have such a poor account of your health. By all means come up to London—to-morrow if you can manage it. Telegraph to me by which train you will travel, and I will meet you at Paddington. I have been thinking over what arrangements can be made for you during your stay, and have come to the conclusion that it will be best for you to make your home with two old friends of mine who have just taken a house for the winter months in Grafton Street, Mayfair. I dare say you have heard me speak of them—they are Sir Peter and Lady Moulsey, great invalids, and, like yourself, desirous of consulting the best London physicians—Sir Peter for his gout, Lady Moulsey for her deafness and weak eyesight. As they are both on the wrong side of sixty, as every room in the house has to be kept darkened for Lady Moulsey's eyes, you will not, I am sure, expect a very gay time of it. But a little rest will not do you any harm after the very hard season you had this year. Also, as you know, in Grafton Street, you will be within easy reach of the best medical practitioners.—Your affectionate uncle,

"H. P. YORKE."

"And if this doesn't drive her to Mentone in less than a fortnight," said Uncle Hugh as he signed and sealed his letter, "her name is not Ellinor Yorke, and I don't know my own niece."

Ellinor's reply to this, telegraphed, ran as follows :

"I am delighted at the arrangement you have made for me. I leave here to-morrow by the 11.40 express."

### PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH BURGLARS.

It has happened that I have been led to cultivate, in the course of my career, a considerable relationship with the subject of burglars and burglaries. In very childhood, dwelling in lonely parts of the country, I was intellectually brought up by thrilling narratives of this description, such as that of the Long Park, a well-known tradition which is religiously maintained in the North of England. In that story, an uncanny-looking pedlar asks leave to deposit an enormous packing-case in an old hall, and movements of life being observed, a gun is fired, and a dead burglar is discovered, armed to the teeth, and supposed to have been ready to sally forth at midnight to rob and murder. Our library contained many old volumes of the *Annual Register* and of *The Gentleman's Magazine*, and the pages of those volumes devoted to criminal matters contained many a thrilling and authentic story. Indeed, I am afraid that burglary, considered, like murder, as one of the fine arts, to use De Quincey's phrase, has considerably fallen off, for I have seen nothing in the newspaper law-reports, except, perhaps, the achievements of the late Mr. Peace, which have been further intensified by Madame Tussaud's Gallery, which quite come up to the details of my juvenile reading. Some years ago, I obtained a Secretary of State's order to visit all the convict-prisons in England. They were exceedingly like each other, and having minutely visited some half-dozen, I came to the conclusion that it was not worth while prosecuting my researches any farther. In the course of these visits I obtained a second-class acquaintance with all the modern burglars of any standing. I also had the honour of an acquaintance with a distinguished barrister, who had a great success in winning verdicts for burglars and other criminals, and who might have said, in the words of the comic opera, Trial by Jury:

And many a burglar I've restored  
To his friends and his relations.

Curiously enough, when this gentleman was raised to the bench, he passed very heavy sentences on all his old friends.

My ideas of burglary were sharply accentuated in early life by a burglary that took place in my own home. It occurred in the neighbourhood of the fashionable town of Cheltenham, where we were staying. It was a cold, snowy, wintry

night. An enterprising burglar commenced his professional business one night at the very reasonable hour of nine o'clock, and proceeded to try various doors and windows without any success until he came to our house. A careless servant had left the window of the schoolroom unfastened. We were all at family prayers, forgetting that we ought to watch as well as pray, and the burglar, viewing the state of things with much approbation, quietly stole upstairs, and, entering a large sleeping-room, settled himself comfortably beneath a big four-poster. It was the father and mother's room, and the unwitting pair quietly went to bed. It very curiously happened that my mother had left on the dressing-table a valuable watch to which she was much attached. For some reason, which she could never define to herself, she awoke, hurried out of bed, seized her watch, and deposited it beneath her pillow. In the dead of the night the burglar arose, and was able to make a very clean sweep of everything. Thirty-five pounds in notes and gold were carried off, and almost the whole of our modest family plate. Finally, the burglar made an excellent supper in the dining-room off cold meat and wine, and leisurely took himself away.

When we came down to breakfast there was a great scarcity of spoons and forks. One of the little girls excited a certain amount of amusement and derision by saying that she saw a big black man enter the room where she was sleeping, look at himself in the glass, and heard him mutter aloud, "I wish this job was done!" When we came to look about us, her narrative did not appear at all so improbable. A very serious burglary had occurred, with a loss to us which could be ill afforded. A small reward was offered for the discovery of the offender, and a letter was received from one of his traitorous confederates remonstrating on the unreasonable smallness of the reward proffered. It was accordingly increased to fifty pounds, and then our burglar was betrayed. The danger of such betrayal is one of the great perils ahead for such cracksmen. In due time he was tried at the assizes, and, despite his asseverations of innocence, was convicted on very clear evidence. The presiding judge was an old man who remembered the time when burglary was punished by hanging. He passed a sentence of transportation for life. Then came a curious dialogue between the judge and the prisoner. "Thank you, my lord," said

the prisoner to the judge; "that is all I wanted." "You needn't thank me," snarled back Mr. Baron G. "I would hang you if I could. Some years ago you would have been hanged for this. I can't hang you now. I am very sorry for it. I would hang you if I could."

My dear mother was strongly moved by the prisoner's protestations of innocence. She was in the utmost terror lest an innocent man should suffer in any way through her means. She visited the scoundrel several times in gaol; she made him a present of a handsome Bible; and, if she had been allowed, she would, perhaps, have sent him beef-tea and jellies. At last the prisoner, whether touched with her simplicity and kindness, or in some degree repentant, made a clean breast of it, and told how the whole matter happened, which took a great burden off the good mother's mind.

There is a lonely, remote village in Derbyshire, remote from railways, which I used to know very well. There is a fine painted-glass window in the venerable church, which has underneath it the words, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings." This window, with the inscription, is connected with a daring burglary. I know well the house where it happened—an old manorial house, for the old rector was a Squarson, living in the ancestral hall, and leaving the rectory to others. The old rector had married a young wife—an arrangement, by the way, which in this case worked exceedingly well, and by-and-by there came the inevitable baby. The old rector, at his time of life, could not stand the noise of the baby, and took himself off to a separate room of his own. One night, in the very depth of the night, the infant made a most howling, precocious noise which awoke the young mother. She attended to her child, and then went to the window and drew up the blind, to "take a look at the night," as people say. To her horror, there was an atrocious-looking man standing on the window-sill. She caught her babe in her arms, and, with a shriek, rushed off to her husband's room. Presently there was a crash of glass, and the burglar, followed by two other men, had dashed into her deserted bedroom. If I remember aright, she had locked the bedroom door on the other side; but this, too, was broken through by the invaders. She awoke her husband, who, on hearing the state of things, lighted a candle by the bedside and produced a pistol. The three

men appeared at the bedroom door. The old rector presented his pistol, and said that if they advanced another step he should fire. One of the men advanced; the rector fired his pistol, and the man fell. The whole house was now alarmed, and the men made off, taking their wounded comrade with them. They were traced by the blood-marks on the snow. The wounded man recovered, and, with the others, received a long sentence.

The worthy clergyman, who was also a magistrate, knew what he was about when he gave the men notice that he should fire if they advanced. It is a mistake to suppose you can shoot a burglar with impunity. A man must threaten actual violence or receive such a warning as was given by my friend, before there is a right to fire. At least such is my impression, but at the same time, I do not employ my solicitor to correct any flaw in my magazine papers. I have a friend, an Australian, who keeps a nugget of gold beneath a glass-case in his drawing-room. I suppose news of the nugget had got abroad, for there have been several felonious attempts to relieve him of it. He keeps a loaded blunderbuss, which he is fully resolved to discharge whenever he has a chance. In vain I pathetically ask him whether he would rather destroy life, or keep a piece of metal, "slave of the dark and dirty mine?" He replies that, of the two, he would prefer keeping his nugget. I tell him that he will run a chance of being tried for murder or manslaughter, to which he replies that he is perfectly willing to take the chance. In my opinion that nugget ought to go to the bank. A friend of mine had a little house with a disproportionate amount of plate in it. His wife, who rejoiced in her glittering stores, was superintending its cleaning, when looking up she saw at the window a pair of evil eyes covetously regarding the plate. That night there was an attempt at a burglary, which was frustrated. Ever since that time the plate has been at a banker's, and the family use nickel.

Coming back to the case of my old clergyman, I should say that he was greatly impressed by the Providential circumstance that the waking of the child had roused his wife, and perhaps had been the means of preventing robbery and murder. Under this impression, to commemorate his gratitude, he placed a painted window in his church, and with an allusion to the crying of the child,

he placed beneath the words of the Psalmist: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings."

I know one or two cases in which there has been great courage on the side of the attacked party and great cowardice on that of the burglars. In fact, this is generally the case when burglars have to deal with the police. I have a friend—a slight, delicate lady, who has shown marvellous courage in cowing a burglar. She went into her kitchen one night when the servants were out or had gone to bed, and found a man in the act of packing up all her silver plate. She resolutely locked the kitchen door, put the key in her pocket, and told him that he should not leave the room until he had placed back every article of silver where he had found it. The man obeyed her in a most abject manner, and was then allowed to sneak out of the place.

Some friends of mine have been giving me an account of a burglary they experienced abroad a short time ago, under circumstances sufficiently remarkable. It was in Switzerland. The husband had carefully secured the door before going to bed. He was, nevertheless, awoke by the noise of someone moving about his room. Suddenly there was a noise at the window, and getting there he saw a robber just getting off a ladder and moving it away. He rang the bell violently, and presently half the population of the hotel was crowding into his apartment. On overhauling his losses he found that he had lost a rouleau of napoleons, and, what he valued more, an old family watch and some jewellery. He told the police that they were welcome to keep the money, but he should be very glad if they could recover the other articles for him. To his great astonishment, before very long he received the watch and jewellery, but the police had taken him at his word about the money. The following was the story of their recovery: It seems that this burglar had systematically followed the plan of using the ladder in his robberies, and limited himself to this one mode of action, which he had found very successful. One night, however, his good fortune deserted him. Hurrying down his ladder, at some height, he missed his footing. Both his legs were broken. He was taken to a hospital, where he died. The locality of his abode being discovered, a search was made, and there my friend's property, with various other goods, was discovered.

I have often visited Dartmoor, which

may be considered a sort of headquarters for burglars, during their periods of involuntary retirement, and have on several occasions gone carefully through the prison, also Millbank, Wormwood Scrubbs, Woking, Chatham, Portland. A released prisoner has published his experiences at Dartmoor, Five Years Penal Servitude, in which he tells us something of the secrets of the prison-house, and speaks of burglars. He mentions the case of a celebrated gentleman crack, who would not only carry on his profession at home, but who would go abroad in the practice of his profession to Paris and the United States. One man who made a celebrated burglary on the abode of a great lady, declared to his brother-convicts that the countess had jilted him, and her jewellery that was found on him was simply a gage d'amour. One of my burglaries took place in this very district—Dartmoor, and the very house where I have often found myself. I believe it is the only case in which an escape has been successfully made from the great prison. A convict, finding the principal gate, through some mischance, for one moment left unguarded, ran across the road and made a burglarious entry into the premises of a clergyman, who lived just opposite the prison. There was no one in the house. He went from room to room until he got to the reverend gentleman's bedroom. There, in one of the drawers, he found a neat suit of clerical black, and leaving his convict-suit in exchange, he sallied forth into the open. A Dartmoor convict who makes his escape is invariably overtaken. He is easily seen from the high watch-towers, and his garment at once betrays him. In this case the burglary proved a fortunate one for the offender, for he got off scot-free.

The literary convict, to whom allusion has been made above, has some more observations about burglars, which may have a quiet, reassuring effect on nervous people in the country. The commercial element enters much more into burglaries than many suppose to be the case. The housebreaker wants to be assured that the booty he is after is really worth his trouble. He does not see why he should give up his peace of mind and his night's rest, with the chances of resistance and the perils of the law, for a small or dubious return. In these banking days the chances of picking up coin are greatly lessened. Our convict says that a burglar will be at immense pains before "cracking a domicile." He



will have a correct plan of the house, duplicate keys, and a description of the plate and valuables. The ordinary way, he tells us, is for the burglar in his private capacity to make love to one of the women-servants, and worm out all the private information he can. Another plan is to "plant" some male or female confederate in the house to "work" out the design. These people get some sort of situation in the house, and are scrupulously honest in all little matters, and so win confidence in order to betray it. Sometimes they report that the "swag" is not worth trying for. Of course, inferior artists will not be so grand in their notions, but turn their hands to anything which may turn up. I knew a poor farmer once who had a burglary on his premises. He lost a great deal more than he could afford, but hoped that one burglary would last him his lifetime. In this, however, he was disappointed. The wretches returned the following week, and looted the leavings of their last visit.

It must be said that the burglaries of the present day are much less numerous and much less violent than in "the good old times." Despite the disapprobation of the eminent judge to whom I have referred, the abolition of the punishment of death for burglary has worked well. Formerly, when a criminal knew that he would be hanged for burglary, and that the law could do no more if he added murder as well, burglary and murder in horrible combination used often to go together. When the graver crime arises, it is generally in resisting capture by the police; but even these cases, though they occasionally occur, are few and far between. There was a burglar who told a man, in a burst of confidence, that there was no house in England which could resist the attack of a well-trained burglar. The two circumstances which they found most baffling were locks on the inside of shutters or the presence of a little dog inside a house, both of which would give an alarm. Of course the simple expedient of locking doors is often a baffling circumstance to the members of the profession.

I remember having a conversation with the chaplain of a convict-prison, who really had a very great regard and affection for his queer parishioners. He seemed to think that they were more unfortunate than criminal, in that they had broken the eleventh commandment, "Thou shalt not

be found out." He considered that they were quite up to the average of any ordinary congregation. The governors of such prisons give a very different account. Governors and chaplains are sometimes in collision on points of prison discipline, and I am afraid that the governors are more frequently in the right. The governor of one convict-prison told me that he had detected no fewer than six conspiracies among the convicts to murder him in the course of a twelvemonth. Their lives would not be safe for a day except for the deterring influence of a flogging on the triangle. I am thankful to think that I saved one convict from this terrible and degrading punishment. I do not, however, know whether he was a housebreaker or not. I was going along the corridor of a prison, when, at a cell-door, I saw a prisoner in fierce altercation with a warder. The prisoner was in a violent passion, and seemed to be on the point of assaulting the warder. If he had done so, in all probability he would have been tied up to the triangle, and would have received his three dozen. I laid my hand kindly on the man's shoulder and expostulated with him. I told him that he was only running his head against a wall, that the warder was only doing his duty, and that resistance would provoke punishment. I tried also to slip in a few words of sympathy for him. It is wonderful what a kind word is often able to do. I had the satisfaction of seeing the man soothed and quieted, and saved from a very serious position. I went once to see a prisoner who was working out his six months in a county gaol for an offence something like a mild kind of housebreaking. The effect was certainly painful. The man was caged behind bars in a compartment very much like the den of a wild beast in a menagerie. A warder was stationed in the space in front of the bars. I was not permitted to give the poor fellow a shake of the hand, which I would willingly have none. It is a great thing that even a prisoner should not lose altogether his self-respect.

There have been some curious narratives which have been repeated to me by friends, but the accuracy of which I have not been able to verify. One night a dear old lady was going to bed in a remote chamber in a big house when she accidentally perceived a man hidden under the bedstead. She knelt down by the bedside and repeated aloud the beautiful collect of the

evening prayer of the Church of England. She then blew out her candle, and quietly got into bed. Presently a voice sounded underneath the bed telling her not to be afraid, and that he would do her no harm. The burglar then came out, and said that this was his first offence, and that he had been driven to it by poverty. He added that the words of the collect had recalled to him the time when he was still innocent, and that if she would only forgive him, he would go away quietly, and never offend against the law again. The story goes on to say that the man was truly repentant, and that the good lady saw him earning an honest living.

I have some reason to believe that this story is really authentic. I am by no means equally sure of a similar story which comes to us from America.

There an amiable spinster calmly watched a housebreaker make a felonious entry into her apartment. "My poor, dear man," she exclaimed, "I am sure you must have been in very dreadful distress before you could think of doing such a very wicked thing as breaking into a house. I am afraid your wife and children must be starving. Sit down and tell me all about it." The repentant burglar immediately burst into a flood of tears. "You must have some bread-and-cheese and beer at once," said the lady, "before we talk anything more about it." How this supper was extemporised is not stated in the narrative. I should like this story to be true, but I am afraid that it is so good as to be good for nothing.

But what I am glad to say is quite true—that there is a material diminution in this dread province of crime. Of course there are men who are altogether equally as bad as Mr. Bill Sikes, and some of the heroes of Gaboriau's fictions. But for the most part they have been brought up in an atmosphere of wickedness, have never learned a useful trade, and have never had the least notion of honesty. To such persons penal servitude is often a most salutary education. The convict-prisons themselves are the healthiest places in the country; a man is taught a good trade during his confinement, and is dismissed with a gratuity in his pocket. The stories of his being hunted down by the police seem to be greatly exaggerated, and if he would only report himself faithfully in the proper quarter, he will receive help rather than interference. Of course there are many men who, with fatal celerity,

recur to the old crimes, and find their way back to the old quarters. On the other hand, there is probably a number of burglars who are leading an honest life, and have become deserving members of the community. It is a most satisfactory fact, as shown in the Government statistics of crime, that as the population of the country increases the number of burglaries and many other offences steadily diminishes.

#### MY DREAM-LOVE.

THROUGH the sweet early morning doth she come,  
When, dim with dew, and tremulous with sleep,  
The scented flowers give out their sweetest sighs;  
When nature wakes, and standing peaceful, dumb,  
Upon the hill-top, knows not if to weep,  
Or smile upon us from the changeable skies.

Sweet dream-love that I never see when day  
Drives all our finer thoughts from earth in haste,  
Lest they should be entangled by the world,  
I would not have thee 'mid this misery stay,  
I would not have thee of my life's cup taste,  
Nor would I that thy sweets were all unfurled.

Thou art mine own, when night's worst hours have fled,  
And faint with fighting phantoms do I lie,  
Waiting for that the dawn shall truly bring—  
Thy sweet calm eyes that tears may never shed,  
Thy pretty hands that touch me silently,  
Thine arms that fold me like some angel's wing!

What does it matter that thou canst not tell  
Of all thou know'st, nor whisper of thy bliss,  
Or kiss me on the lips that speak thy praise?  
Words—sweetest words could only break the spell;  
Thou canst not now betray me with a kiss,  
So leaving me in sorrow all thy days.

Thou art my own; mine only; none can share,  
Thy touch, thy presence, none may hear thy voice,  
Nor twine thine hair, nor press thy small white hand.

'Tis but to me thou art so wondrous fair,  
'Tis but my heart that thou dost bid rejoice,  
'Tis but beside me thou canst take thy stand.

I will be true to thee, mine own, my dream;  
With thee once more I tread the ways of old,  
And wander at the dawning, mid the hills.  
For after all, our lives are what they seem,  
'Tis fancy's wand that turns their grey to gold.  
So real art thou, that all my dream hours fills.

#### ANNE BERGUNION, THE BLIND WOMAN'S FRIEND.

How much is done in this world by personal effort, by the strong man or strong woman in the right place! Carlyle may well be forgiven for a good deal of the pettiness that comes out in the *Life and Letters*, because he preached so well on that often-forgotten text.

Sometimes, in spite of Carlyle, I begin to doubt its truth; and then, when a wicked whisper suggests

That the individual withers and the world is more and more,  
that one human being is for the most part

powerless in this age of big cities, and monster companies, and huge demonstrations, I think of John Pound, cobbler, of Bradford, in Yorkshire, the founder of ragged schools. That is, I used to do so until I read M. Maxime du Camp's account of Anne Bergunion and her work. Since then I have transferred my allegiance to her, feeling that hers was a still more uphill task than that which the Bradford cobbler set himself.

Anne was born in Paris in 1804, the sickly daughter of a small tradesman. In England she would nowadays have become one of those female Ritualists who are always egging their parson on to offend the steady old stagers, or she would have been a "Latter Day Saint," or one of Mr. Besant's "Seventh Day Independents"—anything where there was plenty to do among the poor, combined with unlimited "means of grace" and an absence of the rowdiness which frightens off minds like hers from the Salvation Army. In France a few years earlier she would have had, like many other good people, to worship by stealth, for the penal laws of a Republic which tolerated everything except Christianity, had closed the churches and made it a crime to hear as well as to say mass. As it was, she was free to go to as many "functions" as she pleased, and under an Emperor whose aim it was to stand well with the clergy, the sensitive, impressionable little girl found plenty of "functions" to go to. Then came the Restoration, and monks and nuns had it all their own way; and Anne, who had been sipping at the sweets of a cloistered life, joining in processions, delighting in matins and primes and litanies, thought she had a vocation, and, being then sixteen years old, began, strongly against her parents' wishes, her novitiate at the Mère de Dieu Convent at Versailles. At the end of eight months she was called home by the total break-up of her mother's health, and from this time till she was eight-and-twenty she was as devoted a nurse as one who was herself little better than a confirmed invalid could be. Her own health, always weak, several times gave way so entirely that she was thought to be in a dying state, and actually received extreme unction. This did not prevent her from accepting a dying brother's legacy—a little doubly-orphaned girl of three years old, her care of whom gave her mind the turn which by-and-by made her so useful. Meanwhile, at home, business was not thriving; the

father was a Micawber for whom nothing turned up; and Anne, dividing her days between nursing her mother and training her niece, sat up stitching the greater part of the night to earn enough to keep the household together.

In 1837 a lady who knew Anne's worth was founding a home for young girls, and said to her: "Will you be manager?" "I'll try," replied Anne, and she succeeded; such firmness and tact and power of influencing girls through their affections were centred in that wretchedly feeble frame. She developed, too, what it is the fashion to call "a power of organisation," and before long her twelve girls were in full work for one of the best ladies' ready-made linen shops in Paris.

But, as I said, Anne had that fondness for special services and special rules and dress for which Rome offers so much scope and Protestantism so little. This, which after all is human nature, is at the bottom of all that playing at soldiers which General Booth's followers have made an essential of true religion. If there were in England plenty of sisterhoods there would not be any room for "Hallelujah Lasses;" and that would be a great gain. We think the sisterhood system a tyranny, forgetting that it is a self-imposed rule that these daughters of the Roman obedience lay upon themselves. They are free to alter it if they like. Just as from Little Bethel, by a sort of religious gemmation, there often breaks away a yet littler Bethel, so from one Roman community there often grows out another, held together by a more or less modified rule.

Still, it is a little startling to find that after seven years' successful work Anne, set free by the death of her parents, handed her girls over to a trusty friend, and went into the Convent of the Sacred Heart. Here she might have stayed all her life, but for her health. In vain they gave her dispensations, allowing her meat, and what not, even on Good Friday. She got worse and worse, and at last her brothers persuaded her to come back to the home in what was then the Rue des Postes. Here she met with Dr. Ratier, physician to the College Rollin, and parish doctor (as we should say) to the Bureau de Bienfaisance of the Twelfth Arrondissement—one of the poorest in Paris, out by the Observatory. The good doctor was an enthusiast about teaching the blind. Every day he used to gather some dozen little blind boys and

girls in his consulting-room, and give them, not only a good meal, but such teaching as they, too young or too dull to be received into the Institut des Jeunes Aveugles, were able to take in. "Now, Annette," he would say to Mdlle. Bergunion, "why do not you take in a few blind girls to work with the rest of your flock?" And while she was deliberating, the Secretary of the Paris Indigent Blind Society joined in urging her to the work. "The Institut, you see, takes them at six, and turns them out at eighteen; and what are the poor things to do then, thrown, many of them, literally on the streets? We try all we can to find them homes, but we cannot deal with all; and there are scores who live hap-hazard, in wretchedness, if not in sin, with nothing before them but a possible admission into the Quinze-Vingts, if they live to be forty."

Before Anne had seen her way to do what was wanted, the secretary actually sent her two girls, whom she was to feed and teach for three hundred francs a year each; and, as she did not care to shut her doors in their faces, what was to be thenceforth her life's work, and was destined to outlive her, was thus begun.

It was rather hard on Anne to send her two "incorrigibles" for her first attempt. The pair of blind girls refused point-blank to do anything in the way of work. They were sent there to be waited on, and waited on they would be, by Mother Anne, and by no one else. They made fun of the prayers, and when a priest was set to scold them, they went off humming an opera air. This was a bad example for Anne's girls, now increased in number to thirty-five; but, instead of turning the rebels away, she determined to conquer them by kindness, treating them like grown babies, and yet without wounding their morbid sensitiveness. Her good-humour must have been as great as her tact not to be wearied in such a seemingly hopeless task; but she did win them over so thoroughly that she was able to set them to teach some of Dr. Ratier's little ones. The secretary was determined not to let her rest. He soon handed over to her six more blind girls, three of whom had been sent back to the institute as incorrigible. Their hearts, too, she won, and before long she had some of them working in the kitchen, others house-cleaning, others combing and dressing the babes who belonged to some of the girls in the home. Another she actually ventured to send out on errands, and one

turned out bright enough to be such a wonderful sewing-mistress that, while sitting among a group of stitchers, she was able, by her acute sense of hearing, to detect when a stitch was too long or too short.

But Anne was not satisfied. Hers was a lay work, under the direction (as far as she was directed at all) of laymen, like the Indigent Blind Secretary and Dr. Ratier. Her dream had always been to found an order; and, reading in the life of Mdlle. de Lamourous, the foundress of that House of Mercy at Bordeaux, which has now four daughter-houses in other French towns, that "with the promise of a week's work, three rooms, and a crown-piece in one's pocket, one can found a communauté," she, smiling, but in thorough earnest, proposed to her girls to put themselves under a "rule." They would form a body of sisters—some blind, some seeing, and they would manage the school and workshop attached to the home, which should still, as heretofore, take in blind people of all ages, and keep them all their lives, if they liked to stay.

Good Dr. Ratier entered warmly into her plans. He felt that one who had shown so much self-sacrifice deserved to have her way in trifles, and he got the vicar-general of the diocese to interest good Archbishop Sibour in the matter. His Grace paid her and her girls a visit, and allowed them a special dress, and thenceforth Anne became "mother-superior," and the dozen girls (seven of them blind) who felt a call and stayed with her were styled the Sisters of St. Paul.

How were they to get a chaplain? They were too poor to pay one; and so they had to put up with anyone who would come twice a week to hear confessions and say mass. That was by no means Anne's ideal; she liked to live in an atmosphere of devotion, and so she was delighted when a man of private means, the Abbé Juge, lately returned from Rome, volunteered for the work. "I won't take a sou," said he. "If you find you can spare anything for a chaplain, let it go, after dressing up your chapel a little better, to pay for one more blind girl." They had long outgrown the house in the Rue des Postes, and had moved to Vaugirard; but their new home, besides being too small, was damp. "You will live much more cheaply in the country," said their chaplain, "and it will be far healthier for you all." So he found them an old chateau of Henry the Fourth, at Bourg la Reine, and



paid for it almost wholly out of his own pocket. The grounds were beautiful, but the house small and inconvenient, and the good abbé had left one thing out in his reckoning. When you live on alms, you must live within easy reach of the almsgivers. This would not tell so much in England; but in France, where they do not spend much in advertising, but prefer to make a collection, or house-to-house gathering, it threatened to be fatal. There was nothing for it but to come back to Paris, and, after a world of trouble in finding anything cheap, and any house-owner who would agree to be paid by instalments with no security beyond the word of the sisterhood, at last they got a building belonging to the Maria Theresa Infirmary, founded by Madame de Châteaubriand in the early days of the Restoration. Here there was a good deal of building to be done; but the result was a pleasant, suitable home amid cedars grown from seeds which the author of the *Génie du Christianisme* had brought from Lebanon. Mother Anne and her indefatigable abbé had to spend many weary months between Paris and Bourg la Reine; but at last, towards the end of 1858, the whole communauté was settled into the home which still holds it.

And so Anne saw her dream fulfilled. She had founded a sisterhood, and grafted upon it a blind asylum, and had arranged that the asylum should be the chief feeder of the sisterhood. But for her, these blind sisters who look (and are) so full of loving intelligence, must, humanly speaking, have fallen into the clutches of some wretch who would have lived on what they got by begging or doing worse.

And yet, we are told, there was nothing in Anne's appearance like that of the ideal saint. She was a plain, heavy-looking woman, with pursy cheeks, and anemia stamped on her whole appearance, and nothing attractive about her except a look of indescribable sweetness in her blue eyes.

She was not spared to do much more than give her work a fair start. In the spring of 1863 she broke down, and in spite of change of air, her dry cough showed that there was fatal mischief. Gathering the sisterhood round her, she told them, day by day and week by week, how to act when she was gone, whom to choose as her successor, whom to put into subordinate posts. She could not lie down, the asthma was too bad; at last, in September, the end came. But the sisters were ready for it, and they are going on still, though the

war of 1870 tried them greatly, and the Commune yet more.

As soon as Paris was besieged they packed themselves as close as possible, and made part of their house into an infirmary for sixty-three soldiers. They ran up the Geneva Cross; but the Prussians were bent on destroying the dome of the Panthéon, and the home of the Sisters of St. Paul, being in the line of fire, got three shells through its roof.

How the place was kept going through the siege, none of the sisters could understand. Subscriptions, of course, came to an end; a collection was no use when people were living on rats and sawdust-bread. Happily the cellars of the home were full of potatoes, and they had a good store of dried vegetables. No sooner was the siege over than the Commune began. The sisters kept on their infirmary as a protection; but at last, when May was more than half gone by, the Communards came in, crying, "Come, you nuns, clear out!" And, despite the prayers of the wounded soldiers and the tears of the school-children, they had to go. The women of the neighbourhood, who knew how good they were, called the Communards all the names that an angry Frenchwoman can use, and took the sisters to their own homes. The Abbé Juge, being "a parson, only fit to be set up against a wall and fired at," was put in prison. Had he been locked up in the fourth section, he would have shared the fate of the Archbishop, the Abbé Deguerry, and the rest; but he was put into the third section, where the prisoners, encouraged by their warders, showed fight, and held out till the Versailles came in. Before the end of May the sisters came back to find their house gutted, but their beloved chaplain safe. The Prefect of the Seine thought that housing and training little blind girls was a work deserving State help; so they got four thousand francs that year, and received a gradually lessening sum up to 1876, when it was finally withdrawn.

And what sort of girls are those for whom Anne Bergunion gave up her life? Those who want to know something about them should read M. du Camp's paper in this year's *Revue des Deux Mondes* for April 1st. However much they may know of English blind-asylums, they will learn a great deal from what he says about the ways of blind people. What are their dreams like? It seems the simplest thing in the world when one comes to think of

it; and yet, if you were asked, you would hardly answer off-hand that the dreams of one born blind must needs be dark, colourless—all the life that is in them being in the way of noise and touch. With those, on the other hand, who have lost their sight, the dream-memory grows dimmer and dimmer, forming, while it is fresh, a sort of double life which a blind poetess, Berthe de Calonne, who, as a girl, saw the Swiss lakes, very prettily describes.

I said that many of those described by M. du Camp are affected with nervous disorders, and no wonder, for many come of a half-mad stock. Among Anne's girls was one poor creature whose mother caught her as she came back from a visit to her grandmother, and, sharpening a knife, deliberately put out her eyes. She would have cut her throat but for the neighbours, whom the child's cries attracted just in time. Dr. Dupin got her sent to the institute; but, at eighteen, she had to leave, and, finding it impossible to get a livelihood in her own village, she came to the sisterhood. M. du Camp found two other girls who had lost their eyes in a most remarkable way; pet birds had, in an instant, pecked at them. Their case touched him, for, when a child, he was very nearly blinded by a pet partridge.

The great value of the sisterhood is that the blind sisters, knowing what blindness is, and how it inverts the usual order of thought, have been able to train the novices so successfully, that almost everyone about the place seems to have two sets of faculties—those which are peculiar to the blind, and those which belong to the seeing. One knows how wonderfully the former are developed; it is as if they saw with their foreheads, knowing at once whether the blinds are down or not, whether there is a table in the middle of a room, and so forth, by the sensation of fullness or otherwise, which they receive on coming into it. This sense is in the forehead, or rather below the eyebrows; for if you bind a handkerchief across a blind man's eyes he is helpless; you may see blind children "blindfolded" and playing blind-man's buff with as much spirit as if they had their eyesight. Of course the sense of touch is also greatly intensified; the children never make a mistake in naming whom they catch. That is why everything about these Sisters of St. Paul, their own dress included, is so scrupulously clean. We usually couple blindness with dirt, but a well-trained blind person cannot bear a

particle of dust on dress or person; it is a real annoyance to the nerves which nature, by way of partial compensation, has refined to such a pitch of sensitiveness.

And what are all these blind girls taught to do? It is knitting—knitting from morning to night; none of the manifold works which are attempted more or less successfully in our blind schools. The blind can be taught to do these, but not so as to compete with those who have their eyesight, thinks M. du Camp. He does not speak of mat and basket making, but he mentions turning; and there, he says, the work of the blind is a total failure. They can be taught to use the lathe, but what they make is so badly made, that nobody would buy it except as a curiosity. Knitting seems to come naturally to blind fingers. Sewing is too hard; embroidery cannot be managed at all; and so Mother Anne's girls knit—and, like knitters in England, get very poor prices for their work; three-halfpence for a pair of children's "booties," which have to be finished off and the buttons sewn on by someone who can see. They certainly do not live by their work, and yet, small as is the pay they get, the Paris needlewomen grumble. We hear the same thing in England—prison-work brings down prices. During the Commune all prison-work was stopped (of course, the convents being suppressed, their competition was not to be feared); but, before long, work had to be given out in the women's prisons—there was no other way of keeping them quiet.

If the pay were better, the diet would be more generous, for that is M. du Camp's only grievance. These self-denying sisters feed their poor pupils very well, but they rather starve themselves. "Blindness is so often a sign of scrofulous temperament that something better is needed than the thin beer which is brewed on the premises." M. du Camp is clearly not an abstainer; he believes in the virtues of that wine which so many of his countrymen are abandoning for baser liquors. Of course, there is plenty of writing in the Home. The strangest thing in the world is to see a blind man or woman reading with one hand, and with the other making a copy of what he or she is reading. The sisters have a printing-press, and, besides printing their own class-books, they print M. de la Sizeranne's blind-magazine, the "Louis Braille," which comes out every month, and contains not only practical advice,

but literary, scientific, and musical news. M. de la Sizeranne lost his sight when quite a child, and has, since he grew up, devoted himself as ardently as Mother Anne herself to the welfare of his brothers and sisters in affliction.

The books of the sisterhood are, thinks M. du Camp, too much of one class—the goody-goody. He remarks how delighted a class of the blind children were with the reading of Robinson Crusoe, and recommends that something should be done to cultivate the fancy as well as “the soul.”

But, even though they starve themselves, and starve, too, the imaginations of their girls, Anne Bergunion's sisters are doing a wonderful work. The home contains sixty-six blind girls, some of whom pay a little; others are partly paid for by their parishes; the majority are wholly supported by the sisterhood. There are many good works going on in “frivolous Paris,” but none which is so markedly the outcome of one woman's energy as the Home of the Sisters of St. Paul.

#### WIFE-SELLING.

THE singular belief that a husband was able, with impunity, to part with his wife for a consideration, by public auction, seems to have prevailed, among the lower orders, from a very early period, but how this erroneous impression arose is difficult to say; and it can only be cited as a proof of the ignorance of our lower-class population, an ignorance which is not wholly eliminated at the present day. Strange to say, the perpetrators of this outrage on decency never reflected that they were breaking any law of the land when performing the rough-and-ready divorce; but, on the contrary, imagined that the marriage-tie was lawfully dissolved by this simple process, and that they escaped all its legal obligations.

The custom of selling and purchasing wives in England certainly can claim a very respectable antiquity, and, probably, is based upon the ancient laws of the Anglo-Saxons. If a freeman took away the wife of a freeman, he was to pay his full wergeld, to buy another wife for the injured husband, and deliver her at his home. In the reign of Canute, the law received some modification; no guardian could compel his ward to marry a man she disliked, and the money paid for her was

to be a voluntary gift, and not a compulsory payment. It is not unnatural to suppose that the commodity thus obtained by money was transferable to another for a similar consideration, whenever it may have become useless or disagreeable to its original purchaser. It seems, however, not impossible that the commencement of the custom would be found even in times antecedent, when women, guilty of unfaithfulness, were either put to death or sold as slaves.

An attempt has been made to give a modern origin to the popular belief as to the legality of these transfers; a writer in *Notes and Queries* stating that, after the close of the war in 1815, many soldiers and sailors, on their return, found that their wives had married again—innocently enough, probably, having every reason to believe that their husbands had perished in the battles that were so frequently taking place. How to arrive at a settlement of this awkward situation without having recourse to the tedious and very expensive method of divorce then in vogue, was a difficult problem; so a convenient belief was generally held that to sell a wife in open market was lawful, the first husband being thus free to marry again, and the second marriage standing good, ipso facto. It is needless to point out that there was not a shadow of legality in the transaction, but it was, nevertheless, very prevalent all over the country, especially in the Midlands, as the human war-material was mainly supplied thence.

Alas for the ingenious theory of this writer, and the good manners of our countrymen! Wife-selling must be dated back far earlier than 1815. In an old deed, dated 1302, John de Camoys, son and heir to Sir Ralph de Camoys, “delivered, and yielded up, of his own free will, to Sir William de Paynel, his wife, Margaret de Camoys, and likewise gave and granted to the said Sir William all goods and chattels of which the said Margaret was possessed, and consented and granted that the said Margaret should abide and remain with the said Sir William, during his pleasure.” This deed was sought to be legalised by the Parliament of that year, but, the lady not being a consenting party, legal sanction was refused.

We come to another old instance, showing that the notion of a wife being a marketable commodity had survived the test of two hundred and fifty years, and was entertained, to his misfortune, by one

Parson "Chicken," in the reign of Queen Mary. In his diary, Henry Machyn notes, under the year 1553: "The xxiiij of November, dyd ryd in a cart, Cheken, parson of Sant Nicolas Coldabbay, round about London, for he sold ys wyff to a bowcher." The real name of the cleric was Thomas Snowdel, or Sowdley, nicknamed "Parson Chicken," and he seems to have led but a loose life, for Strype, in his *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, Volume Three, mentions him as an instance of the depraved clergy of the period, and relates that he had been carted through Cheapside, with every species of indignity, for a breach of the Seventh Commandment. He was instituted to the rectory of St. Nicholas Coleabbey, 25th July, 1547, and to that of St. Mary Mounthaw, 23rd March, 1548; was deprived of both in 1554, but restored again in Elizabeth's reign. We have not far to seek for the reason for the sale of his wife. In Edward the Sixth's reign, Parliament, by two Acts, had allowed priests to marry wives, and great numbers of the clergy had availed themselves of the liberty; but one of the first steps that Queen Mary took in re-establishing the Roman Catholic religion was to turn out of their livings all priests who had taken wives, and to divorce them; and it is apparent that, to retain his benefices, Parson Chicken had recourse to the very questionable method of getting rid of his encumbrance as above stated.\*

The custom would have come to a speedy end, and these lines would never have been penned, if the matrimonial sales had oftener proved abortive from the absence of buyers, as indicated in the following old ballad, for the length of which no apology is needed to the reader, as he will find it well worth perusal. It is as follows:

## JOHN HOBBS.

A jolly shoemaker, John Hobbs, John Hobbs;  
A jolly shoemaker, John Hobbs!

He married Jane Carter,  
No damsel look'd smarter;  
But he caught a tartar,  
John Hobbs, John Hobbs;

Yes, he caught a tartar, John Hobbs.

He tied a rope to her, John Hobbs, John Hobbs;  
He tied a rope to her, John Hobbs!

To 'scape from hot water  
To Smithfield he brought her;  
But nobody bought her,  
Jane Hobbs, Jane Hobbs;

They all were afraid of Jane Hobbs.

\* It may be here noted that "Parson" was not always the name for a beneficed priest, but was applied sometimes to persons in the minor orders of the Church.

Oh, who'll buy a wife? says Hobbs, John Hobbs;  
A sweet, pretty wife, says Hobbs;  
But, somehow, they tell us,  
The wife-dealing fellows  
Were all of them sellers,  
John Hobbs, John Hobbs,  
And none of them wanted Jane Hobbs.

The rope it was ready, John Hobbs, John Hobbs.  
Come, give me the rope, says Hobbs;  
I won't stand to wrangle,  
Myself I will strangle,  
And hang dingle-dangle,  
John Hobbs, John Hobbs;  
He hung dingle-dangle, John Hobbs.

But down his wife cut him, John Hobbs, John Hobbs;  
But down his wife cut him, John Hobbs.  
With a few hubble-bubbles  
They settled their troubles  
Like most married couples,  
John Hobbs, John Hobbs,  
Oh, happy shoemaker, John Hobbs!

In the search for instances of this reprehensible custom, we must again pass over a considerable number of years, until the middle of the eighteenth century, when the cases were numerous, owing, probably, to there being more opportunities to bring them before the public in the newspapers. We are indebted to The Annual Register for 1773 for the following: "On the 31st of August, 1773, three men and three women went to The Bell Inn, in Edgbaston Street, Birmingham, and made the following entry in the Toll Book, which is kept there: 'Samuel Whitehouse, of the parish of Willenhall, in the county of Stafford, this day sold his wife, Mary Whitehouse, in open market, to Thomas Griffiths, of Birmingham, value one shilling. To take her with all faults.'" Probably this last clause in the contract had a good deal to do with the very low price the lady produced. The account, however, goes on to state that "the parties were all exceedingly well pleased, and the money paid down, as well for the toll as purchase." The amount of toll is not named, otherwise it would have been instructive to have learnt under what head the lady was classed, to assess the amount.

In another case, extracted from the Times of the 30th of March, 1796, the amount of the toll is stated, but the wife-market appears to have been in a very depressed condition, and to have fallen to a very low level at that time; unless, perhaps, she was notoriously a bad investment. "John Lees, steel-burner, sold his wife for the small sum of sixpence to Samuel Hall, fell-monger, both of Sheffield. Lees gave Hall one guinea immediately to have her taken off to Manchester the day following by the



coach. She was delivered up with a halter round her neck, and the clerk of the market received fourpence for toll." Whilst on the subject of tolls in these cases, in an instance of wife-selling which took place near Brighton, it is shown how the assessment is arrived at. A woman was sold publicly by her husband, in 1826, for thirty shillings, upon which sale a toll of one shilling was paid. The matter was taken up by the local bench of magistrates, who summoned the toll-collector to justify his strange conduct in charging toll; when he at once referred them to the market by-laws: "Any article not enumerated in these bye-laws pays one shilling."

An exceedingly curious arrangement, with regard to wife-barter, occurs in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for 1764, where it is stated that a man and his wife falling into conversation with a grazier at Parham Fair, in Norfolk, the husband offered him his wife in exchange for an ox, provided he would let him choose one out of his drove. The grazier accepted the proposal, and the wife readily agreed to it. Accordingly, they met the next day, when she was delivered to the grazier, with a new halter round her neck, and the husband received the bullock, which he afterwards sold for six guineas.

Another instance is taken from *The Public Advertiser*, of September 19th, 1768: "On Thursday last a publican in Shore-ditch sold his wife for a ticket in the present lottery, on condition that if the ticket be drawn a blank, he is to have his wife again as soon as the drawing of the lottery is over." In this case, nothing is said about the lady's feelings as to this transfer and retransfer; but it is to be presumed she was complacent.

*The Times* of July 18th, 1797, gives the following example of the trade in wives: "On Friday, a butcher exposed his wife to sale, in Smithfield Market, near The Ram Inn, with a halter about her neck, and one about her waist, which tied her to a railing, when a hog-driver was the happy purchaser, who gave the husband three guineas and a crown for his departed rib. Pity it is there is no stop put to such depraved conduct in the lower order of people." A few days later, July 22nd, the same paper made the following sarcastic remarks: "By some mistake, or omission, in the report of the Smithfield Market, we have not learned the average price of wives for the last week. The increasing value of the fair sex is esteemed

by several eminent writers, the certain criterion of increasing civilisation. Smithfield has, on this ground, strong pretensions to refined improvement, as the price of wives has risen in that market from half-a-guinea to three guineas and a half." Again, on September 19th, 1797, it says: "An hostler's wife, in the country, lately fetched twenty-five guineas. We hear there is to be a sale of wives soon at Christie's; we have no doubt they will soon go off well."

Of course, we all know that it was a dogma in which nearly every Frenchman believed, that it was the national custom of Englishmen to relieve themselves of their wives at Smithfield by auction, with the orthodox accompaniment of an halter round the neck; and really it is not to be wondered at that the idea took so firm a hold of their minds, seeing the numerous instances which were brought to their notice in past days; not, indeed, that the present era is by any means guiltless in the matter, as will be seen later on.

In a book written by a French visitor, entitled, *Six mois à Londres, en 1816*, and published the following year, is given an account of a visit to Smithfield, to study, by ocular inspection, the national custom. A seller soon presented himself, leading his wife by a cord attached to her neck; and, taking his stand, he began to bawl, "My wife, for fifteen shillings! Who wishes my wife for fifteen shillings!" but all seemed in vain; the four-footed animals around him disappeared, but no one was in need of a wife. The poor man continued his cries, and was becoming despairing when an amateur presented himself, who began to examine the wife, "Comme il avait examiné quelques instans auparavant une jument que je l'avais vu marchander." Being satisfied with the inspection, he offered the price demanded, and the husband having failed to procure a better bid, pocketed the money, and the purchaser gave his arm to the new wife, who was, says the chronicler, about twenty years of age and sufficiently good-looking.

The tables may be fairly turned upon the French, at all events in one instance, for, according to *The Birmingham Journal* of 25th March, 1865, a case of wife-selling occurred in that year at Maratz, near Lille. The price was a fairly good one—a hundred and twenty-six francs, and a deed of sale and bill of exchange for the purchase-money were drawn up by a notary.

Neither buyer nor seller was conscious of any wrong-doing, but the authorities viewed the matter in a different light, and both parties had to answer for their conduct before the "Tribunal Correctionnel."

Probably many other instances might be found of the custom in France, but there is not the publicity given to them by the press as in this country. It is some consolation, however, though a poor one, to find that we do not possess the monopoly of the public market for wives.

In a great many cases the affair was prearranged between the buyer, the seller, and the sold, who all seem to have quieted their consciences by going through the ceremony of a mock auction; but, in other instances, the wives found chance purchasers, as the following paragraph from *The Doncaster Gazette* of March 25th, 1803, will show:

"A fellow sold his wife, as a cow, in Sheffield market-place a few days ago. The lady was put into the hands of a butcher, who held her by a halter, fastened round her waist. 'What do you ask for your cow?' said a bystander. 'A guinea,' replied the husband. 'Done!' cried the other, and immediately led away his bargain. We understand that the purchaser and his 'cow' live very happily together."

From another cutting, from the same newspaper of February 3rd, 1815, the populace had something to say to the affair, and all did not "go merry as a marriage-bell." "On Wednesday, a most disgraceful scene took place in Pontefract. A fellow of the name of Smith—what a blessed anonymity this name confers!—brought his wife from Ferrybridge, and had her put up for sale by auction at the market-cross, at the small sum of twelve pence; but, after some liberal advances, she was knocked down at eleven shillings. On the purchaser leading away his bargain in a halter, they were pelted by the populace with snow and mud"; but the "fons et origo mali," the husband, seems to have been out of this poetic justice, more's the pity!

There is one case recorded by *The Farmer's Journal*, May 5th, 1810, in which it is pleasurable to find that the biter got bit, in a way almost dramatic. The scene was laid in a village in Cumberland, where a young man, who was not on good terms with his wife, resolved to dispose of her by auction; and the lady, seemingly, acquiesced in the arrangement; but her

feminine quickness of wit had prepared a pit for her lord. Not being able to find a purchaser in the place where they resided, she persuaded him to proceed to Newcastle for that purpose. Accordingly they set out, and this modern Delilah laid her plan so well that, immediately on his arrival, a press-gang conveyed him on board a frigate preparing for a long cruise.

But the law sometimes stepped in to vindicate itself, and was not always allowed to remain in abeyance, for the punishment of this crime of wife-selling, and it is satisfactory to read that at the West Riding sessions, June 28th, 1837, one Joshua Jackson, convicted of selling his wife, was imprisoned for one month, with hard labour, as a misdemeanant. As a rule, however, the offence was winked at, and treated as a joke, especially in the rural districts; the offender being let off, usually, with only a reprimand; and it is no wonder, therefore, that the custom prevailed to a considerable extent, when punished so leniently.

The value of a wife seems to have been mostly held in light esteem, for one was sold at Gloucester market, by auction, in 1841, for half-a-crown, and it is recorded that the purchaser frequently congratulated himself on his "bargain." Even in a commercial sense he could well afford to be jubilant, for the "lot" was attired in a new white bonnet and a black gown, the usual ornament in the way of a halter being included, which was not bad consideration for his money, let alone the lady's charms.

In the year 1859, another instance of this moral degradation was furnished by the town of Dudley, where hundreds of people were assembled in Hall Street one evening, to attend a wife sale. The first bid was three-halfpence, and ultimately reached sixpence. Her husband, in his ignorance, thought that after the ceremony had been repeated three times, she actually had no claim upon him. One wonders whether there were any magistrates in Dudley, and also if there was such a functionary as a policeman among the crowd who followed shouting after the vendor. But "black country" manners and customs are not to be judged by the standard happily existing in other parts of the kingdom.

The *Annual Register* for 1832 gave an account of a singular wife sale. Joseph Thomson, a farmer, after a brief married

life of three years, finding that the union was irksome, agreed with his wife to separate. Acting upon the prevalent notion that by putting his spouse up to auction, and so parting with her, the marriage-bonds were legally unloosed, he came to Carlisle with her, and by the bellman announced the sale. At noon the auction commenced in the presence of a large number of persons; the wife, a spruce, lively damsel of about two-and-twenty years of age, being placed on a large oak chair, with a halter of straw round her neck. Thomson then spoke as follows: "Gentlemen, I have to offer to your notice my wife, Mary Anne Thomson, otherwise Williams, whom I mean to sell to the highest and fairest bidder. Gentlemen, it is her wish, as well as mine, to part for ever. She has been to me only a born serpent. I took her for my comfort and the good of my home, but she became my tormentor, a domestic curse, a night invasion, and a daily devil. Gentlemen, I speak truth from my heart when I say may God deliver us from troublesome wives and frolicsome women! Avoid them as you would a mad dog, a roaring lion, a loaded pistol, cholera morbus, Mount Etna, or any other pestilential thing in Nature. Now, I have shown you the dark side of my wife, and told you of her faults and failings; I will introduce the bright and sunny side of her, and explain her qualifications and goodness. She can read novels and milk cows; she can laugh and weep with the same ease that you could take a glass of ale when thirsty. She can make butter, and scold the maid; she can sing Moore's melodies, and plait her frills and caps; she cannot make rum, gin, or whisky, but she is a good judge of the quality from long experience in tasting them. I therefore offer her with all her perfections and imperfections for the sum of fifty shillings." This man must have been a humourist, and if he had turned his attention to the profession of auctioneer, would have run the famous George Robins pretty hard. The sequel of the story is that after waiting about an hour, Thomson knocked down the "lot" to one Henry Mears, for twenty shillings and a Newfoundland dog, and the parties separated, being mutually pleased with their bargain.

Ah, but the reader will say, these cases occurred years ago, when men's manners were much coarser than now! Surely education and the great social machinery which has been at work so long to elevate the people's tastes, must have eradicated

such monstrous breaches of decorum? Would that such a flattering idea could be borne out by stern facts! A few instances out of many which have occurred in recent times will dispel the notion that men are very much different now to what their fathers were.

A few years ago the practice certainly was not dead in Lancashire. During the second week of November, 1870, a person residing in Bury sold his wife for eight shillings to her supposed paramour, who led her away by the halter to his house immediately after the sale. The inhabitants, however, seemed to have retained some little idea of decency, and did not take the matter altogether apathetically, for they burnt in effigy both the buyer and the person sold. It was said that the woman was nothing loth to change masters; in fact, the women concerned in these unnatural transactions seldom seem to have raised any objections. One case is recorded in *The Annual Register* for 1807, where the lady was rebellious, and it is also remarkable for the large sum that was bid for her—the highest amount that a wife is stated to have fetched. An innkeeper, at Grassington, agreed to dispose of his spouse to a gentleman upon payment of one hundred guineas, the latter depositing one guinea, as "hand-money" on the bargain. When, however, the buyer went the next day to pay the remainder of the amount, and to bring home his purchase, the fair dame proved obstreperous and flatly refused delivery of herself, and the disappointed man went wifeless home again—a sadder if not a wiser being, for the innkeeper declined to return the earnest-money.

In 1881 a wife was sold at Sheffield for the paltry consideration of a quart of beer, and in 1862 a similar purchase was made at Selby market-cross, at the cost of only one-half that amount, merely a pint of beer—which was thought sufficient for a man's helpmate!

The tariff would seem to be on a downward-sliding scale as we advance in the century, for a case occurs, recorded by the *South Wales Daily News*, May 2nd, 1882, at Alfreton, where a woman was sold by her husband for a still lower valuation, in a public-house. The *modus operandi* had the charm of simplicity: in a room full of men, he offered to sell her for a glass of ale, and the offer being accepted by a young man, she readily agreed, took off her wedding-ring, and from that time

considered herself the property of the purchaser.

Another case, in the autumn of the same year, given in *The Pall Mall Gazette*, October 20th, illustrates the modern valuation of a man's partner in life; this time the sister is responsible for the occurrence. At Belfast, George Drennan was charged with having assaulted his wife and a man named O'Neill. The woman was in hospital, and O'Neill did not appear. The extraordinary feature in the case was that the prisoner had actually sold his wife to O'Neill for one penny and a dinner. There was a certain amount of formality about the transaction, a document being drawn up between the accused, on the one part, and O'Neill on the other, which stated that, for the considerations mentioned, he had agreed to assign and transfer to one Patrick O'Neill, all his right, title, and estate in his lawfully wedded wife. The sum of one penny and a dinner seem, indeed, but a sorry exchange for a living woman!

These few instances are enough to afford reflection to the student of nineteenth century morals and civilisation, and return but an unsatisfactory answer to the query: "Are we so very much better than our fathers after all?"

### LEFT OUTSIDE.

A STORY OF KENSINGTON GARDENS.

#### CHAPTER I.

A YOUNG lady and a little girl were sitting on a bench in Kensington Gardens. It was one of those perfect days in early June, when we Londoners are wont to say with enthusiasm, "How lovely it must be in the country!" but when our inner consciousness tells us at the same time that, while it is so lovely in town, we have no wish to go to the country, or anywhere else. The may was over, of course, and so were the horse-chestnuts and the rhododendrons, save for an occasional coronet of deep crimson or palest pink crowning some spray among the dark-green masses of the last-named shrubs; but to make amends for this, there was such a wealth of verdure there, of still unsullied emerald grass beneath, and fluttering, tender, vivid green above, here massed together in richly solid luxuriance, there tossed high in the air like a fairy plume, there again swaying softly downwards in long, feathery lines, whose

shifting shadows swept the grass beneath, that one scarcely missed the spring blossoms, and was content for the most part to think that a world made up of such green and blue, such trees and grass, such turquoise sky and sapphire water could not have anything very serious wanting to it. For the rest, the people scattered here and there along the walks, and more especially the swarms of children dotted about everywhere in their bright summer garments, and encircling the Round Pond like a wreath of living flowers, quite made up the complement of warm colouring desirable under a sunshine as cloudless and glowing as that of an Italian sky.

Perhaps there was a little too much of sunshine and colour altogether where the young lady was sitting; for though the bench itself was under the shade of a broad-spreading chestnut, it faced the dancing, sparkling circle of water about which the children were gathered, with the wide ring of bare, sun-scorched ground around it, and the red roof of Kensington Palace winking in the sunshine beyond; but the smaller maiden wished to see the water and the ducks, and therefore it was necessary for the elder one, not only to keep near them, but to turn her face in that direction, lest her little charge should run off to the water, or get into other mischief without her guardian's knowledge.

It was a very young face, not telling at all that it had seen one-and-twenty summers already; but that was owing to the almost infantile softness and purity of its outlines, the slightly parted lips, and innocent and limpid eyes. It was grave enough for thirty—wearing, indeed, that settled gravity which looks so pathetic on a young face—and was not by any means beautiful, the eyes being simply grey, with no hint of blue in them; the nose too short and straight; the hair a dull light brown, drawn plainly back with no attempt at fringe; and the complexion so devoid of colour as to give you the impression of a plant which has been reared altogether in the dark. Yet it must have known sunshine somewhere or at some time of its budding, for if she laughed—which was very rarely—or if anything startled her, there came into her cheeks such a sudden rush of exquisite rose-colour as made her for the moment almost beautiful; but it was gone again almost as suddenly; and then she looked once more a plain, pasty-faced girl, just the sort of "young person" to be taking care of the white-frocked,



black-stockinged little girl with the big sailor-hat, the crinkly mane of very bright red hair, and the immaculate white silk gloves, who was no sooner seated on the bench beside her than she wriggled off it again, and rushed away, flinging a bright-coloured ball before her with shrill shrieks of laughter:

Her favourite game seemed to be to throw it into a clump of shrubs at a little distance, and then call out in her shrill child's voice:

"My ball's gone among the bushes, Miss Lane. Please get it out."

On which the young lady (for the title "Miss" conceded her that dignity, though there was nothing in her cheap, simply-made gown of grey gingham, her plain black jacket and bonnet, and thread gloves to show that she was the child's governess, and not her nurse) got up obediently, and going to the bushes, poked and burrowed among them with her umbrella till she got the ball out.

This had already occurred six times. Now the cry was raised again, and she was just about to rise as usual, when another voice, with a certain sharpness of intonation in it which gave it a peculiar though not unpleasant accent, exclaimed:

"I do declare that child's real ugly! Why in wonder do you mind her?"

Susan Lane turned round with a start sudden enough to bring the pretty rush of colour afore-mentioned into her face. Perhaps it was that which took the speaker's fancy. She was seated on the other side of the bench—a girl about Susie's age, and also wearing a grey gown, but such a girl and such a gown as seemed to be removed from Susie by a whole antipodes of quality and circumstances. She had a very pretty face—wanting, certainly, in the purely oval shape and soft outlines of the young governess's, but all the more piquante and brilliant by comparison, with a delicate, sharply-cut little nose; a rosy Cupid's mouth; a little pointed chin, so determined to come forward into the world that, for its sake alone, no one could have dared to overlook the owner; eyes more blue than grey; hair more golden than fair, drawn up high on the neck behind, and curled in an elaborate fringe in front; and a complexion so dazzlingly pure in its pale roses and lilies as not at all to need the slight touch of powder with which she had thought proper to adorn it. Her gown, too, though grey, as I have said, like

the other's, was such a one as no English fingers ever made or conceived—a cobweb-coloured cambric, trimmed with ruffles of grey lace, and looped back from the front with knots of satin ribbon over a petticoat of flowered salmon-coloured sateen. The bodice was made like a little jacket, ruffled round with lace, and opening over a waistcoat of the flowered sateen, with sleeves to the elbow, and terminating in long grey kid-gloves; on her head she wore a broad, fantastically-shaped hat of grey straw, adorned with salmon-coloured plumes; and on her feet, which were scarcely bigger than a child's, a pair of marvellous boots, with little embroidered tabs over stockings of salmon-coloured silk, and with heels so high and pointed that the marvel was that she should be able to balance herself on them for a moment. I am afraid that those boots alone would have condemned her among nine out of ten even of the male members of London society, and would have prompted any well-brought-up young woman, with even a grain of knowledge of this wicked world, to rise from the bench and withdraw herself as speedily as might be from the siren possessing them.

But in the first place Susan Lane, reared in a quiet country village, and transplanted thence to the dullest of London school-rooms, had even less knowledge of the world about her than her shrill little taskmaster with the ball; and in the second, those innocent grey eyes of hers, with their wide-open, liquid glance, were sufficiently short-sighted not to take in the boots at all, and only received an impression of a bright, lovely face, and a costume so gorgeous, and yet so unlike anything that the most gorgeously-appointed English girl is in the habit of wearing at eleven o'clock in the morning, that she instinctively connected it with the peculiar accent of the speaker, and set her down as "foreign;" in which innocence—not for the first time—hit the mark more truly than wisdom would have done.

"I—I beg your pardon! Were you speaking to me?" she said, with the little nervous smile of a very shy person. The other girl smiled too, not shyly, but good-humouredly.

"Well, I was. I said I wondered you let that child tease you so. That is the seventh time she has done the same thing. You must be real good to stand it. I should have been mad with her long ago."

"Oh, she is not bad enough for that," said Susie, smiling a little more easily because of the exaggerated phrase. "Children are always rather troublesome, you know, and—and I am only here to amuse and take care of her."

"Well, I should quit," said the gaily-dressed girl briskly. "I am not fond of children, and I would rather help, if I had to, with anything else than nurse work. I guess you are not so strong as I am, either. You don't look it."

"Thank you, I am quite strong, and—and I am not little Flo's nurse. I am her governess," Susan said, with just sufficient touch of dignity to bring a faint shade of colour to her soft cheeks. She had not much to be dignified about, poor little girl! Yet to be taken for a servant—though, indeed, how much better off was she?—hurt and mortified her. She was startled, however, to see the other's vivid blush and quickly outstretched hand.

"Well, I do beg your pardon," she said cordially. "I hadn't the least thought of offending you, though I did take you for the nurse-girl, and that is the truth. You see I knew you were a real lady the moment I heard you speak, and that was why I felt so bad for you. I should not have cared else, but I know ladies do go out to help, and—"

"I know they do," said Susie. It was quite impossible for her not to feel cordially towards this warm-hearted girl—she who got so little kindness from anyone. Why, it was the most delightfully rare experience even to feel the clasp of those slender, grey-gloved fingers; and then the stranger's quick, impetuous speech, and odd verbal lapses, unusual, to say the least, in young ladies of the upper ten, as Susan imagined them, gave the latter a feeling of being quite old by comparison, and took away some of that sense of mental and cultural inferiority which generally oppressed her in the presence of others. There was a pathetic glistening in those short-sighted grey eyes of hers as she surrendered her soft, shapely, bare hand, with its needle-pricked fore-finger (for she had taken off her gloves when she sat down) to the other girl's kindly pressure, and added:

"I am not at all offended, and indeed, when I said I was a governess, I think—that is, I meant that I was engaged as one; but I dare say I should only be called a lady-help in some houses; for though little

Flo has a nurse as well, there are four other children, and I do nearly everything for her—make her clothes and mend them, and see to her hair and—and all that."

Poor Susan was blushing terribly. It seemed to her now that she had made herself supremely ridiculous by her previous boast; but all the same the necessity for entire honesty at all costs was too imperious within her to be silenced, and at this moment little Flo herself interrupted the discourse.

"Miss Lane," she said, coming closer and lifting a small, pale, freckled face, on which righteous indignation was written in a hundred little vertical lines, to her teacher, "I said my ball was in those bushes, and you won't get it for me."

"I am going to get it, Flo," said Susan, "but I was speaking to this lady, and—and you should try to keep it out of the bushes, dear."

Flo turned round instantly, and stared hard at the lady. She did not speak for a moment, during which her small, sharp eyes were taking in every detail of the latter's magnificence, and then delivered herself of the abruptly childish speech:

"You're not a friend of Miss Lane's, I know. Are you one of my mamma's visitors?"

"I am not," said the young lady briskly, "and what's more I don't want to be. I shouldn't care for visiting any house that had in it such a downright ugly little girl as you."

"Oh, don't, pray!" broke from Susan in a tone of distress as real as if the epithet had been applied to her; "it—it isn't kind, and indeed I think—I mean many people think—that she is quite—not that it matters though, Flo," turning to the child with sudden remembrance of what it was right to say on such occasions, "for people like little girls because they're good, not because they're pretty. That doesn't matter at all, really; but—"

The other girl burst out laughing.

"Do tell!" she exclaimed; "if I'm not offending you again, and I didn't mean that sort of 'ugly' at all. I forgot how you English use the word. When we say 'ugly,' we mean ugly-mannered and ugly-tempered; and a child might have the cunningest little face in creation, and I wouldn't care a butternut for her if she was mean enough to make her teacher go

burrowing under those bushes half-a-dozen times in a minute, and never even say, "Thank you."

"I shall tell my mamma if you say I'm mean and ugly," said Flo, whose vanity had a vindictive sentiment in it. "And she says Miss Lane is to play with me. You know you are to," she added, frowning on Susie, who was, however, given no time to answer.

"And I know," put in her pretty champion, "that if you tease teacher, and tell tales, I sha'n't feel like giving you any candies. Say now," holding up a tiny velvet bag, "who's going to sit still, like a good child, and have a lovely time eating the nice things I've got here, while poor teacher gets a rest?"

Flo hastened to declare that she was the child in question, the greed of seven-years-old proving too much for the more precocious pangs of wounded pride; and though Susie remonstrated very honestly, her opposition received no attention, the stranger only laughing as she emptied a handful of bonbons into Flo's lap, and observed:

"I guess they won't hurt her. Calton—that's my brother—says they're the best sort, real wholesome; and he buys them for me himself at Duclos's. You know his store, don't you? It's a mean kind of one to look at, but I will say the things there are most as good as any you get in Paris; don't you think so?"

"I—I don't know," said Susie shyly. "I have never been in Paris, and—and I don't know Du—the store you speak of either. I never go anywhere in London but here, and now and then to the Grove—Westbourne Grove, I mean—when I am wanted to do any shopping."

The stranger's blue eyes opened in very genuine astonishment.

"Nowhere but two places!" she repeated blankly.

"Oh, and to church. I go to church every Sunday morning, and sometimes with the boys of an afternoon too," said Susie, correcting herself.

The wonder in the blue eyes did not lessen.

"Only that! Don't you go anywhere else, ever?" Then as the young governess shook her head, smiling a little: "But perhaps you've not been located here time enough to see about you yet. We came to London six weeks ago, and I haven't seen half I want to by now; but that's the worst of having a brother who has been

everywhere, and knows everything. He's real good to me, I will own, and takes me out somewhere most every night; but it's all an old story to him, and he don't like me to look round or ask questions. He says it isn't English. He's fearfully particular about that; and of course when you've only one brother you must fix yourself to please him. I guess now you wouldn't have surmised I wasn't English?" she added with a delightful little laugh so expressive of perfect confidence in the nature of Susie's answer that, candid as the latter was, she lacked brutality to give it. Fortunately her companion did not wait for a reply. "Well, I'm not!" she said, triumphing in the surprise; "and what's more, though scarcely any of our acquaintances here will allow it's possible, I only came to England this May. I'm American" (she called it "Amurrican," but that is a detail. I am not reproducing this young lady's pronunciation), "and till mother concluded last fall to come over and look after Calton, I hadn't a thought of visiting Europe till I was married. Mother's been always so taken up with Lucretia, my married sister, that I've never stayed home much since I came out. I used to live half my time with an uncle in New England, and the other half with an aunt out West. Calton said it wasn't fair, and wanted father to send me to the *Sacré Cœur* to be finished; but I told him I must keep Paris" (and here again I am tempted to mention that she always called that city "Parris") "for my wedding-trip. I've done it now, however, so I shall have to keep Rome for that. We've not been there yet. We went to Paris first half of the winter, and then to Florence; but mother got sick there, it was so cold; so we went to Cannes instead, and back to Paris for Easter before coming here. Cannes is the loveliest place, and we had the loveliest time imaginable. Were you ever there before you came to London?"

"At—Cannes? Oh no," said Susie, whose geographical excursions with Flo had as yet been of such a limited nature that she had been compelled to make a pause for mental survey of the map of France before answering. "I never went anywhere much before I came to town. We lived in the country, and except when my father took me in his gig— But I have being in London four years now. I am not a new comer like you," she added, breaking off with the slight blush of one

fearful of chattering too much on her own affairs.

The American girl looked at her pityingly.

"Four years in one city, and never been anywhere but to church and shop, and these gardens! It don't seem believable. Don't you even go and see your friends?"

Susie's smile was a little sad.

"I have none—here—and if I had, I should have no time. Little Flo and the boys want me in the day."

"Not all day?"

"Oh yes; there is always something to do."

"Well, I do feel bad for you; but couldn't you go out evenings? You have them, haven't you?"

"No—oh, I don't think Mrs. Farquharson would like it," said Susie, blushing and hesitating; "indeed, I never even thought of it myself, and as I have no friends— But it is kind of you to feel sorry for me," she added, smiling a little, and lifting her eyes gratefully to her energetic companion. The latter was looking really shocked.

"Do tell!" she exclaimed again. "How can you make out to endure such a life? But what do you do, then, at all?"

"Of an evening? Oh, my own mending or any other needlework, and sometimes I write letters home, or try to study a little to improve myself. Oh, and when Mrs. Farquharson is out, so that the piano can't be an annoyance, I practise. I am always glad to do that, and one doesn't want to sit up late when one is tired," said Susie, smiling again.

"I'm tired," Flo broke in suddenly. "I haven't got any more sweets, and I don't want to play, and I've got an ache in my stomach, and I want to go home now."

Miss Lane rose at once in evident concern.

"An ache in your— Oh, Flo, I'm sorry, dear. I hope you have not eaten too many sweets. We'll go home at once," she said compunctiously; but the American girl had already slid off her side of the seat and pounced on the small maiden

in a half-coaxing, half-threatening manner, so merry and pretty, that the young damsel was too fascinated by it to be offended.

"Come now, I guess that's all a mistake," she said, stooping her plumed hat and laughing eyes to the level of the little fretful face. "You ain't sick a bit. Say now, are you? For if you are, you'll never be let have another candy as long's you live; and I was just fixing to bring you some—real nice ones too—next time I come here; but if they make you sick—"

"They don't make me sick," said Flo promptly. "Will you weally bring me some more to-morrow?"

"I will so," replied the young lady; then, turning to Susie: "We are staying at the Great Western Hotel for a spell, and I come here most every morning when it's fine and I've nothing to do. So we are bound to meet again. I hope so, anyway. Good-bye."

"Good-bye—thank you," said Susie.

If she had only not been so shy she would have liked to add something else—to say how she should look forward to another meeting between them, and express something of the pleasure this one had given her. She thought of quite a number of things she might have said, as holding little Flo's hand in hers she made her way along the sunshiny, gritty paths in the direction of the Queen's Road Gate; but she had been too shy, or her English reserve had been too much for her.

She had very little expectation of ever seeing the brilliant stranger again.

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